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UPSC CSE 2025

LIVE

WRITE SMART

ESSAY

SOCIO-ECONOMIC-POLITICAL (PESTEL) APPROACH

- **PESTEL Approach** is the most used approach of essay writing in UPSC Mains. So much so that if 15000 aspirants are writing 30000 Essays then at least 20000 will be written with this cliché approach. Hence, while it is easy and tried and tested approach, there is hardly any uniqueness left in using it. Yet, as it is most basic approach, let us discuss it as it can be applied for both generic (GS) topics and philosophical topics.
- PESTEL stands for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal dimensions. As taught in previous class, our main essay body is of 6 pages and each dimension forms one page. Open up 3 sub-dimensions for each dimension and you will have 6*3=18 dimensions in your essay! Even if the examiner isn't liking say 5 dimensions, ideally, you should still get good score for 13 other dimensions.

While, **socio-economic-political** is must and in mentioned order, you may write other 3 pages from 3 of the following 12 dimensions depending on the topic:

- Environment
- Administrative
- Legal
- Technological
- Psychological
- Sports
- Ethical
- Cultural
- Historical
- Educational
- Health
- Security

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TOPIC - 1: CSM 2015 - Dreams which should not let India sleep

Structure

Decide 6 main dimensions and decide 3 sub-dimensions for each dimension from following:

- **Sociological:** Child, Women, Youth, Farmers, Health, Education, Poverty, Hunger etc.
- **Economic:** Job Creation, Gender-pay Parity, Inclusive Growth Policy Measures, Technological Innovation, Sustainable Development, Commerce without Morality etc.
- **Political-Administrative:** Policy Formulation & Implementation, Bureaucratic Issues, E-governance, Politicization of Criminals & Criminalization of Politics, Corruption, Good Governance, Politics without Principles etc.
- **Technological:** Innovation, Science without Humanity, Human Centric R&D, Artificial Intelligence, Weapons of Mass Destruction etc.
- **Environmental:** Sustainable Development, Trusteeship/Stewardship, Climate Justice, Pollution, AQI, Climate Change, Disaster Management etc.
- **Legal:** Due Process and Procedure Established by Law, Constitution-Legal Aid, Delayed Justice, Human Rights, Environment Law etc.
- **Psychological:** Mental Harassment, Mental Health, Depression-Stress-Suicides, Bullying, Trolling, Remorse & Guilt etc.
- **Historical:** Ancient-Medieval, Modern, World and Post-Independence, Contemporary, Past as Key to Future etc.
- **World:** 3 Different Countries = 3 Different Paragraphs.

Connectors for Transitions Between Dimensions

- **Sociological to Economic:** "The aspirations of the youth are intrinsically linked to their employment prospects. Fulfilling the dreams of our young population requires a robust job creation strategy to provide them with opportunities to thrive."
- **Economic to Political-Administrative:** "Inclusive growth policy measures are only as effective as their formulation and implementation. Crafting well-thought-out policies and ensuring their proper execution is crucial for inclusive economic progress."
- **Political-Administrative to Technological:** "E-governance initiatives pave the way for technological innovation by streamlining processes and fostering a conducive environment for research and development."

- **Technological to Environmental:** "Human-centric research and development are essential for promoting sustainable development. Innovations that prioritize human needs help balance technological progress with environmental preservation."
- **Environmental to Legal Climate Justice:** "Achieving climate justice is deeply connected to upholding due process and legal procedures. Robust legal frameworks are essential to ensure that climate policies are implemented effectively and equitably."

Anecdote

Neeraj Chopra: Neeraj Chopra clinched the gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, making history as the first Indian to win a gold in athletics. Chopra's remarkable achievement not only showcased his exceptional talent and hard work but also inspired a nation. His journey from a small village in Haryana to the pinnacle of Olympic success serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of dedication, perseverance, and belief in one's dreams.

Quote

"When the desire for success does not let you sleep, when there is nothing better than hard work, when you do not get tired after working continuously, understand that you are going to create a new history of success." - Neeraj Chopra

TOPIC – 2: CSM 2023 - Thinking is like a game, it does not begin unless there is an opposite team

Structure

- **Sociological Dimension:**
  - **Education**: How education uses debates and discussions to enhance thinking skills**.**
  - **Child**: The role of 'opposite team' in child development and how it fosters critical thinking.
  - **Youth**: The positive impact of disagreements-agreements-discourse on youth.
- **Economic Dimension:**
  - **Job Creation**: Competitive markets as opposition and their role in fostering innovation and critical thinking.
  - **Gender-pay Parity**: The debate over gender pay-gaps as a stimulant for reforms.

- **Inclusive Growth**: Policy measures promoting diverse economic participation and their impact on collective problem-solving.

- **Political-Administrative Dimension:**
  - **Policy Formulation & Implementation**: The role of opposing political views in shaping effective policies.
  - **Corruption**: How exposure and opposition to corrupt practices encourage ethical governance.
  - **Good Governance**: The balance of power and accountability in administrative processes.
- **Technological Dimension:**
  - **Innovation**: The competitive nature of technological advancements driving creative solutions.
  - **Artificial Intelligence**: The ethical debates surrounding AI development and deployment.
  - **Human-Centric R&D**: The importance of opposing viewpoints in shaping user-focused technologies.
- **Environmental Dimension:**
  - **Climate Change**: The clash of opinions on climate policies fostering comprehensive environmental strategies.
  - **Pollution**: Debates on industrial vs. environmental priorities and their impact on policy.
  - **Sustainable Development**: The role of conflicting interests in achieving balanced and sustainable growth.
- **Legal Dimension:**
  - **Constitutional Law**: The influence of legal debates on the evolution of constitutional rights.
  - **Human Rights**: The confrontation of differing views on human rights issues prompting legal reforms.
  - **Environmental Law**: The legal battles between economic development and environmental protection.

Connectors for Transitions Between Dimensions

- **Sociological to Economic**: "While the educational system plays a crucial role in shaping young minds, the economic landscape provides a broader stage for these minds to apply their critical thinking. In the realm of job creation..."
- **Economic to Political-Administrative**: "Economic policies and job creation initiatives often intersect with political frameworks. For instance, in policy formulation and implementation..."
- **Political-Administrative to Technological**: "The success of political-administrative policies can also be seen in the technological sector, particularly in the area of innovation..."
- **Technological to Environmental**: "Technological advancements must also consider environmental impacts. Debates around climate change, for instance..."

Environmental to Legal: "The environmental dimension often finds itself at the crossroads of legal debates, especially in the context of environmental law..."

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Chronological Approach

Chronological Approach is very effective and few aspirants use the same. It has not been 'exploited' much as yet and hence we can make use of same in our essay.

In this approach, we start from individual and move chronologically to family, organization, society, country and world. Thus, it leads to a natural flow between 6 dimensions that form the main essay body.

While this approach does not have fixed **sub-dimensions** like I gave from PESTEL approach but in general, following 3 sub-dimensions fit well and may be tried for each head i.e. individual, family, organization, society, country and world; making 3 paragraphs per page:

- **Paragraph 1:** Application of topic for individual, family, organization, society, country and world, while mentioning issues for individual, family, organization, society, country and world.
- **Paragraph 2:** Example of individual, family, organization, society, country and world as fits in the topic.
- **Paragraph 3:** Solutions for individual, family, organization, society, country and world as per the topic.

TOPIC - 1: CSM 2023 – Mathematics is the Music of Reason

Structure

Introduction:

- Explain the harmonious relationship
- Historical perspective and example to explain the relation
- Overview of essay approach – chronological

Essay Body:

- Apply the relationship to explain life of an individual
- Apply the relationship to explain family interpersonal relations
- Apply the relationship to explain growth of an organization
- Apply the relationship to explain societal dynamics
- Apply the relationship to explain evolution of a nation

Conclusion:

- Organically move towards world dimension and example
- Conclude with a quote

Connectors for Transitions Between Dimensions

- **Individual to Interpersonal:** "As individuals apply mathematical logic to their personal lives, this structured thinking also enhances their interactions within the family unit, bringing harmony to interpersonal relations."
- **Interpersonal to Organization:** " "The same structured thinking that benefits family dynamics can be scaled up to organizational growth, where logical planning and strategic decisions are crucial."
- **Organization to Society:** "As organizations grow and prosper, they contribute to the broader societal dynamics, where the interplay of logic and reason shapes societal progress."
- **Society to Nation:** "The logical structures that benefit societies also underpin the evolution of nations, where strategic governance and policies are essential for national development."
- **Nation to World:** "The disciplined application of mathematical reasoning at the national level prepares nations to engage effectively on the global stage, promoting international cooperation and addressing global challenges with unified logic."

Anecdote

Stephen Hawking: In 2005, renowned physicist Stephen Hawking attended a lecture in Norway, where he was asked about the existence of God. Rather than dismissing the question, Hawking responded with humility, acknowledging the limitations of human knowledge and the vast mysteries of the universe. His thoughtful response emphasized the importance of intellectual humility and the recognition that wisdom lies not in claiming to have all the answers, but in the pursuit of knowledge with an open mind and a spirit of inquiry.

Quote

"I am just a child who has never grown up. I still keep asking these 'how' and 'why' questions." **- Stephen Hawking**

TOPIC – 2: CSM 2018 - A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both

Structure

Introduction:

- Meaning of quote
- Relevance in brief in historical and modern times
- Overview of essay structure

Individual Perspective:

- Assess the quote as if 'a people' stands for an individual
- Cover aspects such as assessment of quote, an example and solution

Organization Perspective:

- Assess the quote as if 'a people' stands for an organization
- Cover aspects such as assessment of quote, an example and solution

Government Department Perspective:

- Assess the quote as if 'a people' stands for a government department
- Cover aspects such as assessment of quote, an example and solution

Societal Perspective:

- Assess the quote as if 'a people' stands for a society
- Cover aspects such as assessment of quote, an example and solution

National Perspective:

- Assess the quote as if 'a people' stands for a nation
- Cover aspects such as assessment of quote, an example and solution

International Perspective:

- Assess the quote as if 'a people' stands for an international body
- Cover aspects such as assessment of quote, an example and solution

Conclusion

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Connectors for Transitions Between Dimensions

- **Individual to Organizational Perspective:** "Just as an individual's downfall can result from neglecting principles for privileges, organizations too face similar fates when they prioritize short-term gains over ethical practices."
- **Organizational to Government Department Perspective:** "The challenges faced by organizations in balancing ethics with profits mirror those encountered by government departments, where prioritizing power over public service can lead to corruption and inefficiency."
- **Government Department to Societal Perspective:** "The erosion of principles within government departments often reflects broader societal issues, where valuing privileges over social justice can result in widespread social unrest."
- **Societal to National Perspective:** "The dynamics within societies provide a microcosm of national issues, where nations that prioritize self-interest over global principles face significant diplomatic and economic challenges."
- **National to International Perspective:** "The national pursuit of privileges often complicates the functioning of international bodies, where the balance of power and principles becomes crucial for global governance and cooperation."

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